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Chief, Geographic Research

Comments on Questions Raised by the IG in his Survey of the Office of Personnel

REFERENCE: Your Memorandum Dated 5 February 1959, Subject: IG Survey of the Office of Personnel, and attachment

a. What are your views as to the merits of a CIA Career Staff?

The determination of the merits of a CIA Career Staff would involve an examination of the objectives or aims for its existence. There can be a number of valid reasons for creating a Career Staff in CIA, some of which were no doubt used when the present Career Staff was organized and set in motion. Many of these reasons are similar to the objectives of a good personnel management program toward which any agency should strive.

If the purpose of a Career Staff is to publicize some quality or goal which a particular group has achieved, it becomes questionable whether the setting apart of the group is the most effective management practice. It would probably be far better to focus directly on the task of developing the qualities or goals throughout the whole of the Agency, and to consider that employment by the Agency constitutes in itself the establishment of a Career Staff.

Perhaps the objective would be to get extra personal commitment of intent and devotion to duty from a selected group of people who are going to be subjected to unusual kinds of activities. Whether this constitutes a legitimate reason for the establishment of a Career Staff is subject to considerable question. Unless there is some compelling desire to separate Agency employees into categories of achievement or utilization, the objectives for a Career Staff must, of necessity, coincide with the objectives of good management for the Agency, i.e., to assure the hiring, retention, and full development of capable personnel to carry on the work of CIA. We would also have to examine the creation and existence of divided loyalties, for then individuals would hold a dual membership of Career Staff and Agency employment -- both presumably leading toward the same objectives. It would be unfortunate indeed to have a part of the Agency personnel think first or last of their obligations or associations in an organization within the larger Agency organization.

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Many people have said that membership in the Career Staff would mean more if it had something to offer in the way of concrete benefits. This, of course, raises the whole question of the desirability of incentives. Many people strongly believe that when people commit themselves to work for an organization, that organization has every right to expect full and complete utilization of the individual's capabilities toward the accomplishment of the organization's objectives. This does not allow for individuals to hold in reserve certain capabilities that are only to be utilized when adequate or attractive incentives have tempted them to the full exploitation of their abilities. We tend to rely too much in this Agency upon the offering of material benefits to influence personal behavior and pay too little attention to those other forces which motivate personnel to react and perform the way they do. On the other hand, it is true that some people work better because they are working toward the accomplishment of an immediate goal which may be in the form of an incentive. These same people have difficulty in working effectively against long-range goals which cannot be as positively expressed as can money in the bank or early retirement.

Then there is the difficulty of assessing the intangible benefits that accrue from the existence of a career staff. These intangibles happen to be the only specific things at the moment which can be associated with the present CIA Career Staff. They include the value derived from association with like-motivated people, and identification with a group of individuals who have similarly dedicated themselves to the high purposes of this Agency. It is entirely possible that most of the merits to be derived from Career Staff membership are intangible in nature and -- if these intangibles serve to motivate people to better performance and dedication to the Agency's objectives -- then by all means we should endeavor to strengthen the Career Staff along these lines. It is apparent, however, that all too little is known about individual behavior in organizations and those factors which tend to have the most influence.

b. Should eligibility for membership be more restricted than at present?

Here again, we would have to examine the objectives for a Career Staff before answering the question. Whether the membership should be more restricted than at present depends upon what is desired for a Career Service in the Agency. If the Agency finds it desirable to set apart a unique intelligence specialty -- or perhaps several specialties -- then by all means membership should be more restricted. The more restrictive the membership and the qualifications for it, the more the organization

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will mean to certain types of people. Some people would undoubtedly find a greater satisfaction of the type they wanted from belonging to an organization that was exclusive in nature. At present, the only basis for not becoming a member of the Career Staff is a negative one; consequently, membership is almost synonymous with employment in the Agency. It is certainly a truism that Career Service, to ever amount to anything, has to mean something fairly specific and worthwhile to its members. The best apparent out is to merge the Career Staff concept with over-all employment in CIA, where dedicated people -- highly motivated, efficient, working anonymously and with high morale -- are needed and actually, in fact, exist to make CIA an elite service within the government. This would be a long-term educational and public relations effort both within CIA and outside the Agency to develop a foundation for the growth of ideas and concepts concerning the elite service character of the Agency.

c. Is the basic concept of separate career services for CIA sound?

If the Career Service is looked upon as a "career home" for an individual, the basic concept has some merit in that it links together like activities being conducted in a variety of components under one career administrative device. This can be an advantage for the individual employee insofar as the components of the Career Service are willing to forego the exercise of organizational prerogatives in the career development of their people. If the Career Staff cannot provide a broader field for career development than that available to the individual in his own organizational component, then it serves no really useful purpose. In addition, the Career Service to which an individual belongs should not limit personal development to or within that Career Service. It is possible that barriers erected between Career Services tend to make the best utilization of personnel more difficult.

d. In terms of intelligent personnel administration, what features of the CIA Career Service Program have been of most assistance to you in exercising your responsibilities?

The Career Service Board has been of assistance in providing a forum for the development of personnel management concepts, procedures, and techniques that otherwise would be more difficult to develop. The Career Service Board has also provided a sensing device for the determination of action to be taken in difficult personnel matters. Both of these benefits could also come from the routine operation of a staff group composed of the same line supervisors working toward the objectives of the development of the best personnel management policy and techniques for the Office.

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- e. Are you satisfied with present procedures governing the processing of personnel actions through the various Career Service Panels and Boards to effect promotions, rotations and assignments? In what way could these procedures be improved or modified to best meet your particular needs?

There is little consistency in the utilization of the Career Service Board to deal with promotions, rotations, and assignments. In some instances, the Board is asked to recommend the action to be taken, whereas in other instances it actually engages in the decision itself. One of the most notable advantages of having the Board involved in these various personnel actions is that certain actions are surfaced and do not become a matter of a "close-to-the-chest" decision of a very limited group. There is also a degree of objectivity enforced in the consideration of promotions and assignments that has a tendency to filter back to the supervisors of the organizations represented on the Board. Some of the procedures that are inherent in the operation of the Career Service Boards and Panels seem to overcomplicate a process that could be more simple and direct. Rather than have an elaborate mechanism for forcing the supervisory chain to act according to the legislated procedures established for it, it might be a little more effective and better over the long range to work directly to strengthen our supervisors in assuming those personnel management responsibilities which are legitimately theirs to perform. It is true that the procedures themselves, in certain cases, are making better supervisors. One example of this is the requirement that the Career Preference Outline be filled out, which assures that each individual thinks his career out and that each supervisor discusses it with him. This conference between supervisor and employee could, however, take place without requiring all of the other expenditure of overhead involved in the career preference outline system.

- f. What would be your main objections, if any, to greater interchange of employees on a rotation basis between DD/P, DD/I and DD/S?

In answering this question, we would have to consider what we are attempting to accomplish through rotation of employees. Since it is our first duty to do our own job as well as we can, we should consider rotation as a contributing factor in helping us to accomplish this. If it were possible to send a Bulgarian specialist to DD/P and receive one in return, there would seem to be no objections. Both parties would retain their basic competence on Bulgaria and would benefit from cross-fertilization as well. However, this is not usually the case, and we must look to other benefits -- either for ourselves, for DD/P, or for the Agency as a whole -- to result from rotation. Among these benefits, we would recognize that we

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could get some of our interests known; the Agency would benefit by having people in positions of responsibility who know the problems of people in other parts of the Agency; and the Agency would have better cohesion and would operate more effectively because specialists from each side of the house would have experience in working together to develop solutions to common problems. There has been no real interchange of employees by rotation, so anything done along this line would be new and experimental in terms of value to be derived from it.

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